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# The French fact in Canada

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# The French fact in Canada

Published by Authority of the  
Right Honourable Joe Clark,  
Secretary of State for External Affairs,  
Government of Canada, 1985

Produced by  
General Publications Section,  
Department of External Affairs,  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
K1A OG2

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## **Historical background**

Canada has inherited a dual culture from its two founding peoples, and it grants the French and English languages equal status across the country. Over the past 20 years, the historical importance and development of the country's French-speaking population has prompted Canada's federal government to take measures to promote the French language. These measures are now producing results: 6.25 million Canadians live, study and work in French to some degree, not only in Quebec, but elsewhere as well.

From its beginnings, Canada created a place for the French language within its institutions. In 1867, the British North America Act, which united the four founding provinces, established several linguistic guarantees. French and English became the languages of Parliament and the federal courts, as well as the legislative assembly and courts of Quebec. When Manitoba joined Confederation several years later, it demanded and obtained the same guarantees.

One hundred years later, in the 1960s, Canada became aware of a new presence in Canadian society — its French-speaking population, or its "francophones". A commission of inquiry was established to travel throughout the country and allow Canadians to express their feelings about the language they speak. This was at a time when Quebec was in the throes of serious social and political upheaval: indeed, Canada was questioning its future as a united entity.

The creation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism is a milestone in Canada's linguistic history. The Commission's mandate was "to inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races".

The Commission heard briefs, conducted an extensive research program, and organized meetings with groups and persons from all social backgrounds who were interested in language and culture.

After eight years of consultations, it recommended extensive language reform proposing a solemn and symbolic declaration on the equality of the French and English languages and the adoption of the necessary institutional structures for the legislatures and courts. The Commission requested daily access to public services for francophones in their language. Finally, it pointed out the long-term advantages of providing educational opportunities in both

of Canada's main languages. All subsequent federal actions have been inspired by the conclusions of this report.

On the strength of these recommendations, the federal government began a series of reforms in 1969. It adopted the Official Languages Act, which states that: "the English and French languages are the official languages of Canada for all purposes of the Parliament and Government of Canada, and possess and enjoy equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all the institutions of the Parliament and Government of Canada".\*

The Official Languages Act established the steps that the Canadian government must take to ensure equal status between French and English in all federal activities, and created the position of Commissioner of Official Languages to ensure compliance with the Act. The entire federal government is subject to this legislation.

In this way, Parliament showed the provinces the path to follow in the official recognition of French and of bilingualism in Canada.

With the patriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982, Parliament firmly entrenched the equal status of the two official languages, at the federal level and in New Brunswick, in the fundamental law of the land. The effects of the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms on Canadian francophones will depend on how it is interpreted by the courts.

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\* Official Languages Act, 1968-69, c 54, s 2.

## Demographics

The distribution of mother tongues across Canada reflects the history of colonization and recent immigration. Today, French is the language learned in childhood and still understood by one-quarter of Canada's approximately 25 million inhabitants. English is the mother tongue of six out of ten persons, while in 1981, the mother tongue of 3.2 million Canadians was a language other than French or English.

**Population by mother tongue, 1971 and 1981, Canada**

Year	1971		
	Mother tongue	Total number	Percentage of the population
English	12 973 810	60.2	21.7
French	5 793 650	26.9	13.1
Other	2 800 850	13.0	14.1
Total	21 568 310	100.00	18.3

Year	1981		
	Mother tongue	Total number	Percentage of the population
English	14 918 460	61.3	15.0
French	6 249 100	25.7	7.9
Other	3 175 625	13.0	13.4
Total	24 343 185	100.00	12.9

Source: 1971 — Statistics Canada, Special bulletin, Catalogue 92-773 (SP-3), December 1972, Table 1.  
1981 — Statistics Canada, Catalogue 95-904 (Volume 3 — Profile series A), 1981, Table 1.

The portion of the population whose mother tongue is English grew by 15 per cent between 1971 and 1981; the portion whose mother tongue is French grew by 7.9 per cent. Although their real numbers increased, the percentage of French Canadians in the total population decreased. In one decade, they dropped from 26.9 per cent of the total population to 25.7 per cent. Their increase in numbers is almost entirely due to Quebec, where the francophone population increased by 9 per cent, as compared to less than 2 per cent in the rest of the country.

Only successive waves of immigrants have maintained the size of the

population with a mother tongue other than English or French. Without this factor, the strong attraction to English would have reduced this percentage of the population; the stability of the figures is more apparent than real.

While the 6 249 100 Canadians whose mother tongue is French live in all of Canada's ten provinces and two territories, they are mainly concentrated in the East. Eighty-five per cent live in Quebec, nearly one-half million reside in Ontario, especially along its eastern border, and about 250 000 call New Brunswick home.

The remaining 4 per cent of Canadians whose mother tongue is French, approximately 250 000, are scattered across the other seven provinces as well as the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

The percentage of francophones is at its highest in Quebec. In 1971, 80.7 per cent of Quebec residents were francophone. This figure grew to 82.4 per cent in 1981. In New Brunswick, nearly one-third of the population is francophone. In the other provinces, however, francophones represent less than 6 per cent of the population. The percentage of francophones in those provinces either has dropped slightly or was kept at about the same level by internal migration.

#### **Total population and population with French as mother tongue by province or territory, 1971**

Province or territory	1971		
	Total population	Population with French as mother tongue	%
Newfoundland	522 105	3 640	0.7
Prince Edward Island	111 640	7 360	6.6
Nova Scotia	788 960	39 335	5.0
New Brunswick	634 560	215 725	34.0
Quebec	6 027 760	4 867 250	80.7
Ontario	7 703 105	482 040	6.3
Manitoba	988 245	60 545	6.1
Saskatchewan	926 245	31 605	3.4
Alberta	1 625 875	46 500	2.9
British Columbia	2 184 620	38 035	1.7
Yukon	18 385	450	2.4
Northwest Territories	34 810	1 160	3.3
Total	21 568 310	5 793 650	26.3

**Total population and population with French as mother tongue  
by province or territory, 1981**

Province or territory	1981		
	Total population	Population with French as mother tongue	%
Newfoundland	567 680	2 655	0.5
Prince Edward Island	122 505	6 080	5.0
Nova Scotia	847 445	36 030	4.3
New Brunswick	696 405	234 030	33.6
Quebec	6 438 405	5 307 010	82.4
Ontario	8 625 110	475 605	5.5
Manitoba	1 026 240	52 560	5.1
Saskatchewan	968 310	25 540	2.6
Alberta	2 237 720	62 145	2.8
British Columbia	2 744 470	45 615	1.7
Yukon	23 150	580	2.5
Northwest Territories	45 740	1 240	2.7
Total	24 343 180	6 249 100	25.7

Source: 1971 — Statistics Canada, Special bulletin, Catalogue 92-773 (SP-3), December 1972, Table 1.  
1981 — Statistics Canada, Catalogue 95-904 (Volume 3 — Profile series A), August 1982, Table 1.

*French in everyday use*

A mother tongue, as defined in official documents, is the first language that is learned by Canadian citizens and not necessarily the language they use. About 15 years ago, statisticians introduced a new variable to census surveys to indicate the state of language in Canada better: the concept of language of use, or the language spoken at home. This information allows an assessment of a phenomenon known as language transfer, or assimilation, which has been apparent for a long time, especially among minority groups. How many persons still use their mother tongue, and the linguistic mobility of Canadians, can now be determined.

Across the country, 24.6 per cent of Canadians, or 5.9 million, gave French as the main language used in the home in 1981, as compared to 25.7 per cent, or 5.5 million, in 1971. With the exception of Quebec and New Brunswick, there has been a 9.5 per cent drop in the everyday use of French during those ten years.

The figures from 1971 and 1981 show that francophones are losing

ground. If data on mother tongues are compared to data on language of use, it becomes obvious that outside Quebec, francophones have dropped from 5.3 per cent to 3.8 per cent of the population. The gradual erosion of this minority group is explained essentially by language transfer. The rate of assimilation is defined as the proportion of Canadians who no longer use their mother tongue in their daily lives. At a maximum of 2 per cent, language transfer is very low for francophone Quebecers, but it averages 40 per cent for francophones who were born in Canada but live in other provinces. The farther French-speaking people are from Quebec and the more scattered they are, the higher their rate of language transfer will be.

### Rate of language transfer by province or territory, 1971 and 1981

Province or territory	1971	1981
Newfoundland	43.4	57.2
Prince Edward Island	43.2	42.1
Nova Scotia	34.1	37.1
New Brunswick	8.7	9.7
Quebec	1.6	2.3
Ontario	29.9	33.9
Manitoba	36.9	44.0
Saskatchewan	51.9	63.4
Alberta	53.7	57.0
British Columbia	73.1	71.8
Yukon	73.4	70.2
Northwest Territories	51.3	54.5

Calculation of the rate of language transfer:

French, mother tongue — French, language of use × 100

French, mother tongue

### *Bilingualism gains ground*

Since the Official Languages Act was passed, Canadians who know enough French and English to carry on a conversation have been considered "officially bilingual" in census surveys.

The 1981 census showed that nearly 16 million inhabitants, or two-thirds of the population, spoke only English. Four million stated that they could carry on a conversation in French only, whereas 3.7 million declared themselves

to be "officially bilingual". This last group, which today represents 15 per cent of Canadians, increased by 2 per cent in ten years.

About one-third of francophones are bilingual, compared to only 8 per cent of English-speaking or "anglophones". Quebec has two million bilingual persons, more than one-half of Canada's bilingual population. Nearly 1.5 million, or 29 per cent, of francophone Quebecers and one-half million, or 50 per cent, of Quebecers whose mother tongue is English or another language are officially bilingual.

In the other provinces, the great majority of francophones are bilingual. During the recent census, nearly three-quarters of a million francophones stated that they could conduct a conversation in the two official languages.

From 1971 to 1981, the rate of bilingualism dropped in certain territories and provinces, primarily because for the first time, French Canadians declared that they could no longer carry on a conversation in their mother tongue.

The number of bilingual anglophones diminishes with their distance from Quebec. New Brunswick and Ontario have the highest percentage of persons who are able to converse in the two official languages and whose mother tongue is not French.

Two opposite trends can be seen. On one hand, the rate of bilingualism is higher among anglophones under 30 years of age than among their elders. On the other hand, outside Quebec and New Brunswick, language transfers toward English are the most common among persons under 30. It can be concluded that young people in the East, which contains two-thirds of Canada's population, are most likely to become bilingual. In the West, however, the transfer to English from minority groups continues to rise.

**Knowledge of both official languages by mother tongue  
and province or territory, 1971 and 1981**

	English and others			
	1971	1981	Number	%
Prince Edward Island	2 420	2	4 625	4
Nova Scotia	17 605	2	29 370	4
New Brunswick	22 250	5	40 455	9
Quebec	413 155	36	560 910	50
Ontario	322 175	4	531 680	7
Manitoba	25 195	3	33 925	3
Saskatchewan	15 895	2	21 720	2
Alberta	37 325	2	90 475	4
British Columbia	64 850	3	116 995	4
Yukon	765	4	1 355	6
Northwest Territories	6 240	1	10 590	2

	French			
	1971	1981	Number	%
Prince Edward Island	6 690	91	5 155	87
Nova Scotia	35 430	89	31 985	90
New Brunswick	113 865	53	141 095	61
Quebec	1 250 635	26	1 504 190	29
Ontario	393 890	82	392 805	84
Manitoba	55 735	92	46 070	88
Saskatchewan	30 090	95	21 920	87
Alberta	43 680	93	51 985	85
British Columbia	36 585	96	37 175	85
Yukon	445	99	460	88
Northwest Territories	3 110	86	2 250	84

## The provinces

The federal government is empowered to achieve the common goals of the country as a whole. National defence, the printing of money, banking, criminal law, and the naturalization of immigrants all fall under its authority. But Canada is a confederation of provinces whose governments retain the jurisdiction vital to achieving the objectives and goals of their respective residents. Thus it is the provincial governments and their agencies and institutions that have the greatest effect on the daily lives of Canadians.

The federal government can pass laws to protect and promote the French language, but it cannot dictate the provinces' course of action in linguistic matters. Over the past 20 years, it has done much to encourage the provinces to give francophones legal guarantees and provide them with services in their own language.

### Quebec

Quebec is the only province where French is spoken by the majority and is the language used in government and the courts, as well as numerous other aspects of everyday life. Quebec remains the centre of French-Canadian culture and the bastion of the French language in North America.

In 1969, aware of the erosion of the French-speaking population and the threat of English assimilation, the Quebec government passed an act (Bill 63) to promote the French language. Faced with the attraction English schooling held for a growing number of students whose mother tongue was not English, the government in 1974 passed Bill 22, another protective measure limiting access to education in English for non-anglophone Quebecers. Finally, in 1977, the Quebec National Assembly passed Bill 101, which instituted the Charter of the French Language and expressed the Quebec government's resolve to make French the standard and customary language of work, education, communications, trade and business.

The Charter created the *Office de la langue française*, a body with responsibilities such as determining Quebec's policy on linguistic research and terminology. The use of terms standardized by the Office is now obligatory in official texts and documents.

Similarly, the provincial government helps businesses whose language of work has been English to adopt French as the working language for their Quebec operations. French is officially recognized as the province's language of work.

Its artistic and cultural richness as well as its technology, especially in communications, has made Quebec a focal point for French-speaking Canadians. The regular support the federal government provides to the provinces also contributes to Quebec's cultural development.

The energy and uniqueness of Quebec francophones are recognized throughout the rest of Canada. As does the federal government, Quebec provides the other provinces with technical and financial resources through inter-provincial co-operation agreements and direct agreements with agencies representing francophone minorities. Moreover, Quebec has always attracted skilled francophones from other provinces by offering them a place to grow and develop.

With about 20 television stations, 100 or so radio stations, ten daily and some 200 weekly national and regional newspapers, Quebec francophones are reaching out well beyond their provincial borders. The advanced electronic communications systems of the federal government extend their influence from coast to coast.

With federal approval, Quebec enjoys the status of a participating government in the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation (ACTC), and participates in the activities of other international francophone organizations, in which it has considerable influence.

### *New Brunswick*

New Brunswick is the heart of Acadia, a region of early French settlement and, at the request of the provincial government, the French and English languages received equal status in New Brunswick under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This historic event took place in 1982, when the Constitution Act was passed. French and English enjoy the same rights and privileges in the legislative bodies and government of New Brunswick. New Brunswickers may use either language when dealing with the government.

Acadians in New Brunswick have received certain public services in French for about ten years, particularly through the provincial Ministry of Education. However, French services are offered only when the demand is great enough or the function of the institution in question justifies it.

English is the language of work throughout most of New Brunswick. French takes precedence in the regions with a high concentration of francophones.

The Acadian culture is strong, as can be seen by the international acclaim of novelist Antonine Maillet and singer Edith Butler. The city of Moncton is also the home of the largest francophone university outside Quebec. In the area of jurisprudence, this university represents an interesting link between

common law, which is practised in all the provinces except Quebec, and the French language.

Furthermore, with federal approval, the government of New Brunswick holds the status of a participating government within the ACTC, and participates in the activities of other international francophone organizations.

### *Ontario*

Ontario has the largest population of all the provinces in Canada, and the greatest number of francophones outside Quebec. The province offers numerous services in French, but has not made bilingualism official. No constitutional status has been given to the French language; however, franco-Ontarians enjoy certain French-language rights in provincial courts in specific judicial districts.

French is not used in the provincial parliament, but many laws have been translated. Franco-Ontarians have the largest French-language school system outside Quebec and, in most cases, they can use French in civil proceedings. Lastly, a provincial educational television station broadcasts some of its programs in French.

### *Manitoba*

Manitoba's linguistic history is unique. When the province was established more than a century ago, it had two official languages, French and English. The two language groups were equal in size. Equal status for both languages was one of the conditions set by Manitoba when it joined Confederation.

However, in 1890, after a massive influx of anglophones and other immigrants whose mother tongue was not French, the Manitoba Legislature passed an act repudiating the official status of French.

Several years ago, as a result of a long legal battle launched over a simple parking ticket, the Supreme Court of Canada declared the 1890 act to be unconstitutional and restored the French language to its official status.

The right to use French in the provincial legislature and before the courts is guaranteed today. With the moral and financial backing of the federal government, francophones in Manitoba are negotiating to obtain certain public services in French.

### *The other provinces*

French has no legal or constitutional status in any of the other provinces. These provinces subscribe to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees the right to education in French, but education in the language of Molière is provided only if there is a strong demand or when numbers warrant.

Moreover, the very low population density in most of Canada is a serious handicap to creating costly infrastructures.

## The federal government strides forward

By extending its administration and services across the country and to all Canadians, the federal government offers assistance and support for francophones wherever the need is felt. It implements its policy of language equality and the promotion of French by co-operating with the provinces, not by meddling in their affairs. In areas outside its jurisdiction, it offers support through subsidies. Federal government support takes many forms, including the promotion of the French language in its own public service, assistance to non-federal public sectors and the private sector through the Secretary of State Department, promotion of French in the cultural sectors that come under its Department of Communications, and assisting minority language education.

### *En français, s'il vous plaît*

Translating the spirit of the law into tangible actions, the federal government initiated a major effort to make its administration bilingual. In the opinion of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission, this effort was to be stepped up to encourage provincial governments to accept French and English as languages of use.

The federal administration comprises 180 departments, Crown corporations, commissions, and organizations which include several private businesses with franchises from federal bodies. All these institutions play a major role in the daily lives of millions of Canadians: and from Parliament to Air Canada, including the Supreme Court, Canada Post, the Canadian Forces, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and the RCMP, the infrastructure has been established to enable the people of the ten provinces and two territories to be served by and communicate with the federal government in the official language of their choice.

To provide French services everywhere is to attempt the impossible. Not all public servants speak French. Besides, the Official Languages Act concerns only the linguistic capabilities of organizations, not of individuals. This means that all federal government bodies must be able to serve the public in either of the official languages whenever there is sufficient demand.

In the past ten years, the face of the federal public service has changed considerably. It has opened itself to French and francophones, and it has gone back to school. During this period, federal employees have taken about 30 000 student-years of language training. And when positions re-

quiring contact with the public are being filled today, preference is given to bilingual candidates.

As part of its official languages program, Canada pumps \$250 million annually into language training for the public service and the Canadian Forces, translation, and the administration of internal bilingualism programs.

Are French-speaking persons any better represented in the government? Their progress over the past 20 years speaks volumes. In the 1960s, only 21 per cent of public servants were French-speaking. Today, francophones make up 27 per cent of the public service, and they have increased from 17 per cent to 25 per cent in the officer categories.

Parliament appointed a Commissioner of Official Languages to see that the equal status of the two official languages is respected, and to encourage recognition of the French and English languages. The Commissioner, who acts as intermediary between the public and government on a consultative basis, oversees the application of the Official Languages Act, receives complaints from the public and makes recommendations on ways to implement Parliament's intentions more effectively. The Commissioner reports directly to Parliament.

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages is also important as an information source to make Canadians aware of the statutory equality of their two languages.

### *Education: a top priority*

Outside the public service, education has become the latest domaine in the struggle to establish francophone services. From Moncton, New Brunswick, to St. Boniface, Manitoba, francophone minorities want to educate their children in their own language. The Canadian Constitution of 1982 grants linguistic minorities "where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds". However, long before this official recognition was granted, regions with a large francophone population had their own schools, school systems and French-language universities. Since 1970, the federal government has been giving the provinces funds earmarked for second-language education. More than \$1.6 billion has been spent on this program.

Each year, some \$140 million is allocated for programs in minority language and second-language education. Added to this figure is another \$40 million in youth programs for language learning. Approximately one-half of these public funds are for French-language programs in all provinces except Quebec.

Although enrolment in French schools is proportionally lower outside Quebec, the number of anglophone students taking daily French courses has increased by 15 per cent over the past ten years.

Federal funds are divided between an over-all grant and subsidies for specific initiatives and activities: the creation of language training centres and training institutions for teachers, special projects, bursaries for teachers, travel allowances, second-language summer bursaries, and official language monitor programs.

Finally, various groups, organizations and institutions receive financial assistance for projects to distribute the findings of linguistic research and promote minority language teaching.

### *French immersion*

In the 1970s, an innovative form of teaching began in Canada, which capitalized on the coexistence of its two major linguistic groups: immersion classes. This method, developed in Montreal during the 1960s, is simple: children are taught in their second official language. The teaching system varies from one institution to another; some offer all courses in the other language, others offer partial immersion.

Second-language immersion now attracts a growing number of anglophones from all social backgrounds who want to reap the full benefits of life in a bilingual country. Since the 1977-78 school year, the number of French immersion classes has risen dramatically. At that time, 237 schools offered the program; today, 730 schools have adopted it, of which 420 are located in Ontario.

During the same period, the number of students enrolled in these classes has risen from 37 881 to 116 524. Anglophone students in immersion classes now represent nearly 4 per cent of the anglophone student population.

As a result of immersion, the increased number of bilingual people is the bridge between the two linguistic communities.

### *A helping hand to official language minorities*

Alerted by the situation of francophones outside Quebec, the federal government has maintained a policy of strong support for minorities over the past 15 years. The Department of the Secretary of State provides substantial funds to them through representative non-profit associations. Funds allocated in 1983-84 amounted to \$21 million.

These funds are intended partly to cover the operating expenses of associations dedicated to the economic and cultural development of minority groups. But the Department of the Secretary of State also participates in the creation and operation of cultural centres, handicraft co-operatives, historical societies, folklore troupes, choral societies, scout and guide associations, *cercles français*, theatre co-operatives and troupes, farm wives' associations, publishing

houses, local or regional arts councils, recreation centres and literary societies, as well as a number of other activities to encourage the spread of minority cultures. The Department of External Affairs also supports international exchange programs operated by these associations.

### *Using telematics*

For the past 40 years, the federal Translation Bureau (its terminology branch in particular) has worked diligently to enrich the French language through the publication of a great many lexicons, terminology bulletins and other linguistic aids — products of international francophone co-operation. Since 1974, it has operated a computerized terminology bank; the third phase of this system, Termium III, contains 750 000 bilingual entries, comprising two million scientific, technical and administrative terms. Through telematics, this system can be accessed from anywhere in the world.

Originally designed to meet the federal government's internal needs, this data bank quickly surpassed its initial purpose. With 200 terminals across Canada, Termium III has become a major tool for promoting and encouraging the French language. Its reputation has spread far beyond Canada's borders. Terminals have been installed in the United States and in seven European countries. A long list of international organizations use its services, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Economic Community, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. *Électricité de France* now has its own terminal, and since November 1982, the *Haut Comité de la Langue française* (now the *Commissariat général de la Langue française*) has also been equipped with one.

## **Communications — mirroring a country's culture**

Rapid technological advances have created new and complex links between culture and communications. Aware of this relationship, Canada has made its Department of Communications responsible for a wide range of national cultural bodies. Through the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canada Council, Telefilm Canada, the Public Archives, the National Library and the National Arts Centre, the government nurtures the nation's cultural growth, and thus French culture as well, in Quebec and the other nine provinces.

### *Participants in francophone development*

Federal institutions are active in francophone development. With its 355 radio and television stations and transmitters, and its 12 stations and 64 rebroadcasting transmitters that are either private or community-owned, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) broadcasts in French across the country from Whitehorse in the Yukon to Windsor, Ontario, and from St John's, Newfoundland, to Victoria, British Columbia. Sixty-five per cent of the CBC's programming is Canadian content. Some of the other programs come from countries of the *Communauté radiophonique de programmes de langue française*, in which Canada plays a major role.

Regional television stations participate in the programming of the national network, which has its head office in Montreal. AM radio stations broadcast local and regional programs, which take up an average of 35 per cent of the programming schedule.

Radio is especially important outside Quebec, where it plays an indispensable part in the survival of French culture and values. CBC radio and television broadcasts ensure a francophone presence and offer French-speaking groups the opportunity to join in their activities through free advertising, live broadcasts and musical events. Radio and television stimulate and often direct local cultural life. Canada's airwaves are a special means of communication for francophones.

### *Film plays its part*

In order to make full-length feature films for regular distribution outside its borders, Canada has established its own modern agency for film production and distribution, with offices across the country.

Devoted to the enrichment and promotion of Canadian culture, the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) produced 280 films, videotapes, dubs and audiovisual works of all types in 1983-84 alone.

The NFB also has about 30 offices across Canada to serve as regional centres in a vast educational and community distribution network, through which it provides a service crucial to the promotion of French culture.

Film production is also supported by Telefilm Canada, which injected about \$10 million into television productions last year, 14 of which were in French. Telefilm Canada's other activities include assistance in scriptwriting, whereby it tries to promote screenplays and television dramas by well-known Canadian writers.

Finally, the Department of Communications has made the Canada Council responsible for financing artistic life and productions. The Council provides professional artists with direct financial assistance, and supports arts organizations through operating and special project grants.

Each year, it distributes \$65 million to support literature, publishing, music, dance, theatre, visual arts, cinema, video and photography.

Furthermore, the Council encourages the professional training of touring companies, business agents and managers, and helps them expand their activities. This is one of the special ways in which the federal government supports French-Canadian cultural life, in Quebec and elsewhere. For years, Canada Council grants have enabled francophone communities to carry on cultural and technical exchanges.

### *Riding the wave of technology*

French-language cultural programming reaches people in Canada through a vast network of communications systems involving radio and television broadcasting, telematics, satellite transmission, and cable broadcasting. The federal government developed some of these systems or participated in their development. Telidon is the best example of this kind.

This videotex system can transform the family TV screen into a powerful, easy-to-use tool. An ordinary television set equipped with a decoder and a telephone line is all that is needed to access data banks. Dozens of Canadian companies are designing software and services compatible with Telidon. Today, French Canadians are riding the technological wave and putting their own special imprint on the latest fields, particularly those in which the federal government plays a major role.

## The international scene

In an effort to expand its francophone interests internationally, Canada is trying to develop and encourage French as a language of communication and co-operation to unite people who use it to varying degrees.

In addition to joining in cultural and technical exchanges, and exchanges of people and information with European and African francophone countries, Canada participates in all multilateral francophone organizations, particularly the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation (ACTC), and in two annual conferences, the conference of national education ministers and the conference of ministers of youth and sport.

These co-operative efforts benefit all Canadians, and Quebec has occupied a special place in them since they began. New Brunswick has also obtained the status of participating government. Canada maintains close contacts with France, Belgium, Switzerland and Luxembourg. France and Belgium play a major role in helping French Canadians discover their origins. The federal government has established cultural centres in their capital cities to promote exchanges with these two countries. In October 1984, it created a more intensive linguistic co-operation program with France.

Canada is also promoting co-operation with all French-speaking African countries with which it maintains bilateral ties in the areas of education, culture, science and technology. To strengthen the solidarity between industrialized nations and developing countries, it has initiated various technical assistance programs through the ACTC.

The Canadian government supports numerous international francophone associations. These private agencies, which operate on government contributions, give further impetus to French-speaking peoples throughout the world.



## **Tomorrow's world**

Canada's history as a defender and promoter of the French language is still very recent. This task is a long-term undertaking. The legal provisions, incentives and modifications made to national programs have not been in place long enough for their effects to be measurable. Basing their conclusions on the last census, some demographers predict that the country will be polarized between francophones in Quebec and anglophones in the other provinces. However, the effects of establishing French in the federal civil service and bilingualism in Manitoba and New Brunswick are just beginning to be felt. Moreover, the skyrocketing number of anglophones enrolling in French immersion programs involves a population that is still adolescent.

The federal government protects the French language within its jurisdiction, and promotes it to provincial authorities and the international community. Steps taken since the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission inquiry have made the public aware of the value of bilingualism and the French language. Numerous national programs have profoundly changed the attitudes of English-speaking Canadians. Twenty years after a serious crisis, Canada has been able to carve out a new place for its francophones. In Quebec, and in many ways in Ontario and New Brunswick, French Canadians are now firmly set on the path to the future.

They have overcome the traditional cultural gap to gain a firm foothold in the areas of telecommunications and advanced technology. The numerous French-based economic and technical exchanges are the crowning achievement in this development, which foreign investors have found to their advantage for a long time. In Canada, the French fact belongs in the future, not the past.

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